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To: plan@ci.lincoln.ne.us
cc:
Subject: East Middle Beltway testimony

07/11/2001 05:18 PM

Dear Planning Commission members;

I am submitting written testimony opposing the adoption of the East Middle Beltway designation. The East Middle beltway, according to the planning staff's own report, does not accomplish the original goals which were assumed when the study process was initiated.

The 1994 Comprehensive Plan (page 107) includes the following statement: "The community views the beltway system as an essential component of the regional transportation network which would move through traffic around congested urban areas, reduce delay and improve traffic flow on the existing urban street system."

From the June 22, 2001 staff report (page 4); "Internal Traffic Relief: The proposed East Middle Route would have a relatively minor impact on traffic on 84th Street and other internal arterial streets. On 84th Street, in the busiest section in the projected future between Adams and Highway 2, the East Middle reduces traffic only 3% to 10%." This section of the staff report also includes the statement; "148th Street, which carries relatively little traffic, is the only street with significant traffic reductions due to the East Middle."

It would be a waste of money to pursue the East Middle project in order to reduce the traffic on 148th Street.

It would seem irresponsible to pursue a project with such magnitude and impact on our community, if it does not even meet the goals that were established when the study was undertaken.

The staff report does seem to support, and my own experience and common sense would agree, that a southern by-pass route connecting Highway 77 to Highway 2 would eliminate a large percentage of commercial semi-truck traffic which congests our current system. However, I strongly oppose the expenditure of my tax dollars, whether they be State, Federal or otherwise, on a project such as an east beltway that does not accomplish the reduction in traffic which was the assumption under which the study was initiated. There isn't a comparable amount of semi-truck traffic on 84th Street as there is on Highway 2, and that makes sense when one examines the common routes of travel and the assumed destinations.

Somehow this whole process took a life of it's own and transformed the question of "Does an eastern traffic corridor reduce urban congestion" into a question of "Where shall we put the east beltway?"

Additionally, the 1985 Comprehensive Plan designated the bulk of the East Middle Beltway area as open space and park uses. If this was good land use planning then, why isn't it still? Unfortunately, the pressure of past planning mistakes, such as the failure to predict and properly plan for adequate improvements to streets such as 27th, 48th (or any other north to south arterial in Lincoln for that matter) is now adding

pressure to make a huge investment in an area such as the East Middle Beltway to pacify the community into thinking that relief from urban congestion is on the way with adoption of this amendment.

I hope you will all reach the same conclusion and vote against the East Beltway. It simply does not accomplish the goals originally established, and it is not needed.

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